SCRIPTURES FOR THE BLIND

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THE PRODIGAL SON (Doré)

Pacific School of Religion

TRANSLATION

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The Great Parable Reenacted

A 1937 version of the Prodigal Son reprinted here by courtesy of the British and Foreign Bible Society

SITTING on a public bench under the burning sun of the "midi" was a young man with his face buried in his hands. His attitude expressed complete despair. Colporteur Charvet, who has just retired after thirty-four years' service, entered into conversation with him, finally offering him a New Testament. "I don't want it," was the reply. "I used to have one, but it was too big to carry, and I threw it into the water." The colporteur felt by intuition that this was not the real reason why he had thrown the book away. After a little more conversation and a few tactful questions, the young man opened his heart and told the colporteur his story. "Several months ago I left my parents and went to the town to live my own life in my own way. But things did not go as I had expected. My hope and my money gradually disappeared. Now I have nothing left. I intended to return home,—that is my home there, the white house you see in the valley,—but having got so far, I am ashamed to go any further. I am afraid too; for, if my parents should refuse to forgive me, there would be nothing left but death."

After listening to this sad confession, M. Charvet, profoundly touched by the story, opened his New Testament and read the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The young man saw the application of the parable to himself, and began to weep over his sinful past. Suddenly, the colporteur conceived a great idea. Telling the prodigal to remain where he was, he went to the house in the valley that had been pointed out to him. Knocking at the door, he offered the New Testament to the old man, who opened it, and who was soon joined by his wife. Asked what kind of book it was, he read them the same passage.

Moved to the very depths of his being by the powerful story, which in the course of the ages has brought tears to so many eyes, he opened his heart and told M. Charvet his story. "We had a son once, and he was everything to us," he said. "Unfortunately, we did not get on well together, and he went away. We have heard nothing from him since. We would gladly forgive him if he would return, but we do not know where to find him." Then Charvet told them everything. "I know where your son is to be found," he began. "He is quite near here, humble and repentant, and has sent me to ask your pardon. He wants but a word from you to return home."

A few moments later the overjoyed mother was weeping on her son's neck, and the father, after kissing him on both cheeks, was shaking his hands. Then they all gave thanks to God for his goodness, and gladly bought a Testament in which they could read together of the reconciled life.

If the People Only Knew!

A simple dramatic sketch requiring less than thirty minutes to give, little costuming, no scenery, and not more than nine persons to fill the rôles. It brings the work of the American Bible Society into vivid focus. Try it with your Bible Class or mission circle

By Francis C. Stifler

Scene I

Two women, Mrs. Bingham and Mrs. Jones, in the costume of the 1850's in an old-fashioned parlor, in the year 1859. Mrs. Bingham has asked Mrs. Jones to drop in.

Mrs. Bingham: Thank you for coming over, Mrs. Jones. I am all alone this week, and I felt I just must talk to you about this letter I received from our cousin Hiram. It has been eight months on the way from the Gilbert Islands. You know, Mrs. Jones, I believe in missions with all my heart; but when one's very own go so far away to live alone among cannibals—oh, well—I must be strong. It is God's will.

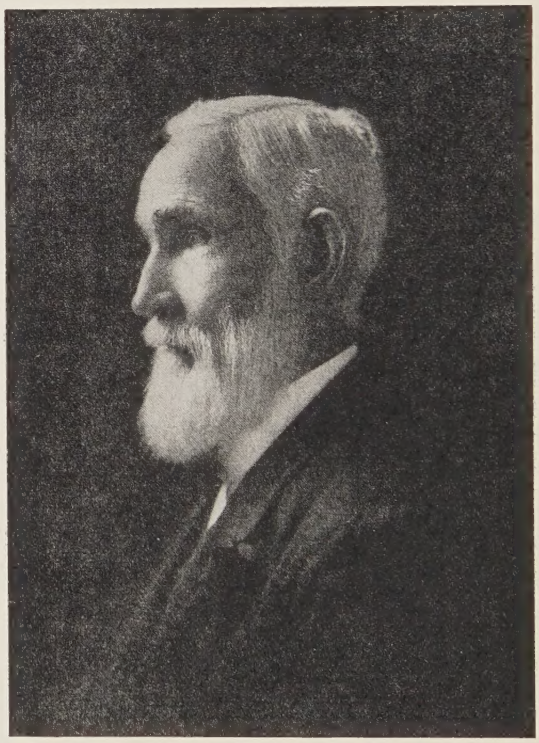
Mrs. Jones: I hope your letter brings no bad news.

Mrs. Bingham: Oh, no. No bad news. Indeed, you would think it was from some young couple off on a lark—such enthusiasm and joy in every line! Hiram and Minerva have been there now about two years. Do you know anything about the Gilbert Islands, Mrs. Jones?

Mrs. Jones: I'm afraid I couldn't even tell you where they are.

Mrs. Bingham: Well, they are 5,000 miles from San Francisco, and at least 1,000 miles below the Sandwich Islands. First, I must tell you the contents of the other letter that came from Hiram a year ago. He and Minerva went from the Sandwich Islands to their new field in a little 156-ton sailing vessel. No white people had ever attempted to live there. They took with them, besides their clothing and other necessities, some materials with which to build a house for themselves. Just think of burning all your bridges behind you as Hiram and Minerva did! There they were among savages who practiced cannibalism and followed all sorts of terrible superstitions. The people couldn't understand a thing Hiram said; nor could he and Minerva understand anything the natives said.

Mrs. Jones: My, my, what do people do in a fix like that? You know, Mrs. Bingham, I've often wondered how the world is ever going to hear about Jesus when there are so many different tongues, and people are always suspicious of one another when they can't understand each other. Don't you always feel as though you can't trust a foreigner when you hear him jabbering away in his own language?



HIRAM BINGHAM OF THE GILBERT ISLANDS

Mrs. Bingham: Well, Hiram reminded me in his last letter about the day of Pentecost, you remember, in the second chapter of Acts? He said that it was intended that every man was to hear the Word of God in his own tongue, and he was glad that he could help carry God's Word into a language that did not have it.

MRS. JONES: Tell me, Mrs. Bingham, how *did* they ever manage to get into the good graces of the savages?

MRS. BINGHAM: You know, Mrs. Jones, Christianity is a religion of friendliness. Hiram and Minerva are wonderful Christians. They really love those poor wild creatures on the islands. By tact and skill and, most of all, by showing confidence in the natives, they won out.

MRS. JONES: But how could they ever understand each other?

MRS. BINGHAM: They did just what anybody would have to do. They took hold of an object and got the people to tell its name. They watched the children at play, and the people at work. By listening and writing down what they heard, they acquired more and more knowledge of the spoken language until they built up quite a vocabulary. After a while they began to discover the way the sentences were put together, and in this new letter they write that they are beginning to work out a grammar.

MRS. JONES: I think it is all so wonderful. Why, Mrs. Bingham, I am getting enthusiastic about it myself. I wish I were young again. I'd love to do something like that for my Master.



GILBERT ISLANDERS AS DR. BINGHAM FOUND THEM

SCENE II

Laid in the year 1894. A Sunday-school teacher has her class before her. Let four or five women impersonate young girls of high-school age dressed in the modes of the 90's.

TEACHER: Girls, this is Missionary Sunday, and I want to tell you a real story that I am sure you will never forget. First of all, let's get the scene of our story located. Do any of you know where the Sandwich Islands are?

SCHOLAR NO. 1: . . . Out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

TEACHER: Quite right. Now, does anybody know where the Gilbert Islands are? *(No answer.)* Well, it's about the Gilbert Islands I want to tell you. They are a thousand miles below the Sandwich Islands and even below the equator. And here is the story: Thirty-seven years ago a young missionary couple from the United States living in Honolulu engaged a small sailing vessel and, after a perilous journey, landed on one of the sixteen islands that make up the Gilbert group, to tell the people there about Jesus.

SCHOLAR NO. 2: Were the people cannibals?

TEACHER: Yes, they were, and Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Bingham were the first white people ever to live among them.

SCHOLAR NO. 3: Were they friendly to Mr. and Mrs. Bingham?

TEACHER: They were suspicious at first; but they could not hold out against the sincerity of Hiram and Minerva Bingham's friendliness.

SCHOLAR NO. 4: Yes, but how could the missionaries tell the savages about Jesus when they didn't know their language?

TEACHER: That's the story I want to tell you. Mr. Bingham and his wife, after months and months of patient listening and asking questions, learned the language of the people and reduced it to writing; for the natives of the Gilbert Islands had never had a written language. Then they prepared a dictionary and a grammar and finally began to translate the Scriptures into the language. The time came when they were ready to print some of the chapters. But they had no printing press. There were but two boats a year stopping at the islands. A letter was dispatched to their friends in the Sandwich Islands, asking that a printing press, ink, and paper be sent them. After many months the press arrived. It had been taken apart and carefully packed. But neither Mr. nor Mrs. Bingham nor any of the natives were able to put the press together and make it work. They were filled with dismay. One day a small boat with four men in it was seen in the lagoon. The men proved to be shipwrecked sailors. One of them, a Scotchman, was found to be a printer! He put the press

together and taught Mr. Bingham how to use it. And so it was that the gospel of Christ was first given in printed form to the Gilbertese. But all this happened a long time ago. Now let me tell you what has just happened. Mr. and Mrs. Bingham have just completed the whole Bible. Do you girls know how many verses there are in the Bible?

SCHOLAR No. 1: I'll guess there are 10,000.

TEACHER: Well, there are something over 31,000. Now, listen to this—Mrs. Bingham, who was her husband's faithful helper in this stupendous task, read every one of these 31,000 verses three times, putting in 120,000 punctuation marks.

SCHOLAR No. 2: Did they print the whole Bible on the little press you were telling us about?

TEACHER: Oh, my, no. There are 937 pages in the Gilbertese Bible, so that would have been impossible. They sent the manuscript to the American Bible Society in New York. New York was a six months' journey from the Gilbert Islands. Setting up type and the reading of proof in a strange tongue is a slow process. Although the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Bingham in this country saved some journeys back and forth, years went by in all this careful editing process; but finally the plates were made from the type, and the printing of the Bibles began in New York. And eight months ago the first shipment of these Bibles arrived at the Gilbert Islands, and word has just come that their people are rejoicing to read them.

SCHOLARS *(in unison as bell rings):* Oh, there goes the bell. Tell us more about the Binghams next Sunday, will you?

SCENE III

Laid in the year 1938. An office in the Bible House, New York. One woman assistant seated at her desk as another approaches excitedly with a message in her hand.

MISS BLACK: Here is something new under the sun. Read this. *(Miss White reads with puzzled expression.)*

MISS WHITE: What does it mean?

MISS BLACK: Read it aloud.

MISS WHITE: "Send 500 complete Gilbertese Bibles. Steamer leaves Sydney May London Mission Beru Gilbert Islands." Well, what *does* it mean?

MISS BLACK: It's an order for Bibles from the Gilbert Islands. It was sent from there yesterday! Think of it! It used to take at least six months to get an order from the Gilbert Islands. Mr. Darlington, the treasurer of the American Bible Society, has explained it to me, and I—

MISS WHITE: You don't mean that a cable has been laid to the Gilbert Islands?

MISS BLACK: Oh, my, no—something more modern than a cable. A radio station has been installed at Beru to communicate with Ocean Island, about 400 miles away. Ocean Island belongs to Great Britain, and so the messages are relayed to the rest of the world.

MISS WHITE: Aren't the Gilbert Islands that place where Bibles must be shipped in special cases?

MISS BLACK: Yes, they are sealed in tin containers and packed in heavy wooden boxes in New York; for they must be unloaded outside the reefs that form a belt around the little town of Beru, and then are transferred to small boats which do not protect the cargo against the heavy swells. And that isn't all. Even after the books get ashore, the tin boxes are still of value, because the termites of the Gilbert Islands are very fond of book bindings.

MISS WHITE: How many angles there are to the work of this Society! Think of the terrible obstacles to translation among the primitive peoples of the earth; and yet it goes on and on. I believe you were not at the staff prayer meeting last week when Secretary North said that we now have in our library here at the Bible House Scripture volumes in 715 languages, and that there are 991 languages into which some considerable portion of the Bible has been translated. Our Society, he said, is continually helping missionaries in translation work, and within the last year we have received the manuscript of the New Testament for the 200,000 Mam Indians in Guatemala. Then he spoke of the revision of the Turkish Bible completed a few months ago, and another Bible finished in the Philippines, making eight complete Bibles in as many dialects used there.

MISS BLACK: One of the leading men of our church was asking me the other day about my work and was surprised to learn that the Bible Society actually does its own publishing. He thought we were a sort of jobbing house that bought and sold Bibles as people wanted them.

I was glad that I worked in the publishing end and could tell him about how we have our own books printed in Tokyo and Bangkok and Shanghai and Manila and Beirut and Cairo, as well as in this country, and so are able to sell them so cheaply. He was astonished that we could sell a readable Bible for as low as 30 cents, and that a good small pulpit or family Bible could be secured for a dollar and a half.

MISS WHITE: I hope you told him about the Blind Bibles.

MISS BLACK: Oh, don't worry. I told him about our Blind work and produced an exhibit; for I happened to have one of our little Braille cards in my pocketbook. He knew nothing at all about work for the blind and couldn't get over the fact that we supplied such expensive volumes to the blind at 25 cents a volume.

MISS WHITE: Did you tell him about our general distribution?

MISS BLACK: Indeed I did. He laughed and said he thought I was letting my imagination run away with me when I told him that we distributed almost eight million volumes last year in 166 languages and dialects and in more than forty countries. I reeled off for him the locations of all our Home District offices and the four headquarters of Negro work, and I think I got all of the Foreign Agencies right. By this time we were sitting down, and I told him the story about the twenty Japanese colporteurs who traveled all over a section of their country, covering a total of about 40,000 miles, and selling an average of 145 books per man per day.



GILBERTESE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS IN THE MISSION SCHOOL

MISS WHITE: I suppose like a lot of people he thought we gave our books away.

MISS BLACK: Exactly so. He caught me up on the word sold and said, "Don't you distribute your Bibles free?" I told him that we made grants of only a small proportion of our volumes to people in destitute circumstances, the C.C.C. camps, and to sufferers in floods and the like. And business manlike he said, "But, even then, who pays the rest of the bill, for your overhead, and your translation work and the difference between the cost of your books and what you get for them, like those expensive Blind volumes at 25 cents?"

MISS WHITE: Miss Black, if we here at the Bible House could just multiply ourselves a thousand times and sit down with our friends and other people who would listen, how much we could do for the American Bible Society!

MISS BLACK: I told this man in our church that there were over thirty denominations that in one way or another supported the Bible Society. But, you may be sure, I told him the whole story—that we count on another sum as large as that given by the churches to come from individuals; that we are remembered by friends of the work in their wills, and that other friends aid us by taking annuity agreements.

MISS WHITE: I think we ought to send you out on the road as publicity agent, Miss Black. You surely are an enthusiastic promoter of the American Bible Society.

MISS BLACK *(laughing)*: Well, when I stopped long enough to take a breath, my friend said, "Every church in the United States of every denomination, and every Christian in the country, ought to help this work. Here's something worth exploring—the possibility of getting every Christian to put a Bible into the hands of some one who doesn't have one. Here is something that's got to be done first. What a challenge there is in it!"

MISS WHITE: How that man's eyes were opened!

MISS BLACK: Yes, and his pocketbook too. He asked how much our church gave, and I told him that it amounted to about thirty dollars. "What? Thirty dollars from 600 people?" he said. "Say, I know ten men in this church who, if they knew what you have told me tonight, would each of them give thirty dollars. Of course, he let himself in then for



A Gilbertese Bible Student



A Gilbertese Girl

a personal gift, which he said the Bible Society would receive in the next few days.

MISS WHITE: Miss Black, it would be a very good thing, would it not, if the churches would explore this agency without which they could not carry on their work. I think your friend got right to the core of the matter. If people only knew, that's all that needs to be done for the American Bible Society.

The Joys and Trials of the Translator

A fascinating story of working word puzzles for a purpose—the highest purpose known to man

BY E. B. STILZ

OTETELA is a tribal language used by about 250,000 people living along the Lomami River in the Belgian Congo. When the Southern Methodist Mission began its work there in 1914, no white people spoke the language. The beginnings of translation work were made through the services of two preachers belonging to the tribe who had, however, been trained in the Presbyterian Mission to the south, and who there had used the Buluba language. They formed the slender human bridge between the two tongues. Various portions of Scripture were translated from time to time and either mimeographed or printed locally in a small way over a period of more than fifteen years. A dictionary and a grammar were also prepared. Although some small portions of the Old Testament were translated, the principal part of the work was done in the New Testament.

Finally, in August 1935, I was assigned the task of finishing the translation of the New Testament and getting it ready to be printed by the American Bible Society. Since that time I have been engaged in that work with very few interruptions. I use two helpers at a time. One of the helpers, Ona Yema, knows Buluba, the language of the Presbyterian Mission. He follows with the Buluba Bible and can tell how they solved some of the problems. Two other helpers, Fundji and Mukandu, have a working knowledge of French, and follow with the French Testament. This is a great help in getting some of the ideas. Sometimes they know what the French means, but may have difficulty in putting the idea into Otetela. Some of the passages require all the wisdom of all of us. Sometimes we call in others to help decide on some point in the language. We also have a Swahili Testament and occasionally refer to that. I keep my eye on the American Revised and, when necessary, look up the Greek. It is interesting work, and there is great joy when we get a difficult passage in good shape. Mr. De Ruiter translated some of Robert's Rules of Order into Otetela, and since then Ona Yema has been chairman, Fundji the committee, Mukandu the secretary, and they call me the bishop. Unless the weather is bad, we usually sit out under a tree in the front yard,—summer resort style,—and there is a horizontal bar nearby to swing on when we need to loosen up.

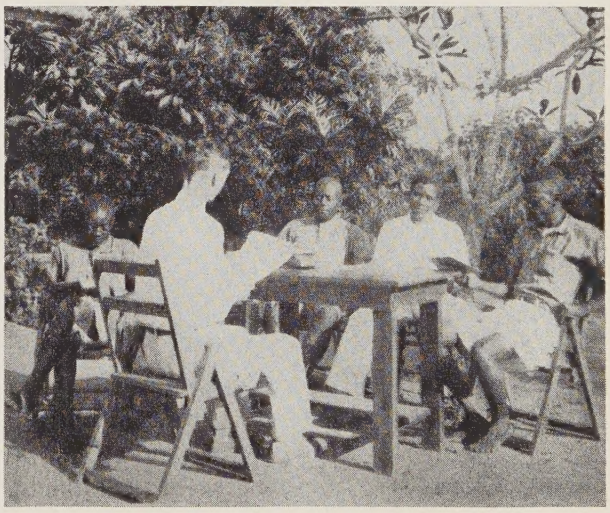
Otetela is a tribal language, with all the intricacies of a primitive tongue. It is indeed more dfficult than some of the neighboring languages. The infinitive and diminutive forms are rather complicated, and there are many tenses of the verb. We discovered a new one recently. One form is used for the past within today; another for beyond today. There are a present imperative and two future imperatives. There are several present tenses. Instead of putting the pronoun objects after the verb as in English, they are put inside of the verb of which they are the objects. A verb may have

so many prefixes, infixes, and suffixes, that it might be hard to distinguish the root. Thus in 'Lam'akandatatshokaka (as he was going), "tsho" is the root. The extra "ka" is evidently added for euphonic reasons, in order to balance the word. There are nine classes of nouns with the different prefixes that go with them in the dependent adjectives and verbs. The words for personal relationships are especially complicated, and considerable thought is required to get them right. For instance, "my father" is "papa," "your father" is "sho," "his father" is "shi," "our father" is "shesu," and so on. There is a long list of words for uncle and aunt. They do not have generic terms for birds and animals as we do. Thus, in translating "dove," there are three kinds here from which to choose; and there is quite a long list of names for different kinds of ants. I count seven different words for "there," depending on whether close or far away, whether a definite or an indefinite spot; and one form has reference to the direction from which something is heard.

On the other hand, sometimes the Otetela has one word where we may have two in English. "Lui" is both yesterday and today, the tense of the verb indicating which it is. "Moyo" means both good morning and good-bye. They have the same word for sow and hear—making it a bit confusing in the parable of the sower. These people are not noted for their appreciation of the beauties of nature. There is no special word for "lilies"; they are only "flowers." There are some beautiful wild lilies that grow on the plains, probably very much as in Palestine. Some of the words are similar to the English; as "nyu" for you plural, "mi" in some forms for the pronoun "me" (both pronounced the same), "tela" for "tell," "mama" and "papa" as titles for mother and father. Some words, of course, have to be imported, as the words for snow and wheat and camel, none of which is found here.

The language is complicated enough, but very expressive, and remarkably complete. Not all the natives know all the words; but usually a term can be found to fit almost any idea, perhaps in a different way from ours. For instance, for saying "He is ready to go," they might use "He is standing in the road to go." In asking what was the final decision of a meeting, they would say, "How did you stop the tongue?" Instead of the lot falling on Matthias, they would say that the lot seized Matthias. Instead of two brothers, they would say, "A man and his brother." The one addressed always comes first; thus: "What thinkest thou, Simon?" becomes "Simon, what thinkest thou?" Instead of saying that they give thanks, they say that they feel thanks. You singular and you plural are two different words. This probably accounts for the plural form "you-all" used in the South; for the African is accustomed to making a distinction.

One has to be on the lookout constantly to keep mistakes and solecisms from creeping in. Instead of saying "tax gatherer," they would say "tax receiver." The word for entering a house is different from the word to enter a village. For members of the body we were using a word which really means that they were cut



MR. STILZ AND HELPERS—NGANDJOLO, ONA YEMA, AND FUNDJI

off from the body. We were using a word "as" for feeding the five thousand which would mean that Jesus put the food in their mouths. In connection with fasting, we had been using the word meaning the main cereal food, so they had the idea that fasting meant doing without only that particular food. Now we have it "things to eat," so as to include everything. Instead of saying, "you and I," they say, "I and you."

Translating the Scriptures is an inspiration and an education. One cannot be just the same afterward. We were going over the latter part of the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, about forgiving, when one of the men who had been laid off came by and wanted help. His wife

had gone back to her father, and he wanted work so that he might buy a present by which to get her back. He was giving an opportunity to translate some of the gospel into everyday deeds. One ought to be more kind and thoughtful of others after reading about the Christian way every day.

The gospel is being spread among these eager, fascinating tribesmen. More preachers are being sent among them all the time. Some of these preachers are stationed at places between two and three hundred miles away. It will be a great day when the people can have the New Testament in their own hands. Education is being pushed by the state as well as by the missions, and many are learning to read. The literate read to those who do not know, and so the light is spread. I heard one reading a passage from the Book of Acts that I had written out this afternoon, and another was clicking his throat in approval at the words.

We are trying to get the translation in the best possible form, and it requires going over many times to get all the different points; otherwise there might be mistakes and misunderstandings. A language committee has been appointed by the mission to decide on different points in regard to the language and have general supervision of the work.

We are planning to have about five thousand copies printed. There should be a constant demand for the Scriptures. Besides our mission, the Catholics are using the Otetela in their work, and the mission of Plymouth Brethren in the northern edge of the tribe are using our literature among their people. Some of the white tradespeople are interested. Recently, an employee of a white trader at Lodja came and wanted to see all the books we have for sale. He said that his employer had told all of them to get books to read and fruit trees to plant; so he had come here. The Scriptures as well as the trees are bound to bear fruit in the coming years. It is their nature.

Ministering to China's Need with the Bible

Soldiers and refugees are not forgotten, but the need is immense and the workers pitiably few

IN a letter dated December 20, 1937, to Dr. North, Mr. Todnem, of the Society's Agency in Shanghai, writes:—

"I have written you mostly of administrative matters, but in our work there are human interest matters also. It is these latter which inspire. The dead weight of uphill going is relieved and lessened by the joy of new adventures in Scripture distribution undertaken in this emergency.

"We have tried to keep Scriptures following the soldiers. The Military Affairs Commission of the Chinese Government has service units with all the Central Government troops. At the head of this service department is Col. J. L. Hwang, aided by the Reverend George Fitch as advisor. Colonel Hwang himself is a devout Christian. Much of this work is with wounded men. Through them we are placing 25,000 gospel portions in the hands of these convalescent soldiers.

"The Y. M. C. A. has a service for soldiers too. The Reverend George Fitch has a liaison responsibility for both. In twenty-four cities the Y. M. C. A. has fifty service huts and comfort stations. These units serve both well and wounded men, much as was done in France during the World War.

"Through the Shantung and Central China units of the 'Y' service, we are placing 20,000 gospel portions in the hands of soldiers who come to their comfort stations, and in the hands of wounded men in hospitals near the lines. So much for the soldiers to date; we shall do more as opportunity opens.

"In Shanghai where there are 195 refugee camps with about 150,000 refugees, Dr. Harvey Hwang and Mr. Z. U. Yao of our own staff are working to get Scripture portions into the hands of all who can read and are interested to receive them.

"I can not now say how many people we have helped in this way. It is a slow service. . . . When the hill seems steep, we thank God that, as we climb, we can help so many with words of cheer and a message that renews hope."

These Might Be Called "Specials"

By George William Brown

THE large department stores and those business concerns which employ high-pressure methods of salesmanship are constantly advertising their "specials": shirts, tires, bedroom suites, books, cosmetics, or milady's finery.

The American Bible Society has its "specials" too—quite apart from the distribution of the Scriptures through the usual channels supervised by the District and Division Secretaries, which include Scriptures circulated through colporteurs and distributors, the provision of Scriptures at cost, below cost, or as outright grants to needy individuals, Sunday schools, missions, churches, and institutions.



Left to right: Josephine White Magpie, Ruth Two Crow, Vera Red Owl, Lydia Starr, Lizzie Bull Bear, Babbette Shawandosa, Amandaline Red Willow, Mollie Wounded Head, Evelyn Clifford, Isabelle Two Bulls—students at Pine Ridge School, South Dakota

The "specials" about to be described, although supervised from the headquarters office in New York, touch the farthest boundaries of the United States and penetrate into a surprising variety of communities and social levels.

Notable in this special list is the free provision of New Testaments through the cooperation of Army chaplains to the young men enrolled in C.C.C. camps. During 1937 a total of 41,470 New Testaments were furnished free to the men who asked for them. In addition, 456 Bibles and 6,000 portions were similarly provided; or a total of 47,926 Scripture volumes.

Beginning in 1933 and down to the end of 1937, there were distributed free in the C.C.C. camps 243,635 volumes, mostly New Testaments and Bibles, at a cost to the Society of $12,212. The importance and value of this ministry are often referred to in eloquent terms by the chaplains. The Chief of Chaplains of the United States Army, on his retirement from office at the end of 1937, wrote the Society: "Words fail to express our gratitude. I might write at great length telling about the good that the American Bible Society is doing in the C.C.C. and Army. . . . I have often said that one of the most fruitful works for good that the office of the Chief of Chaplains is doing, is the sending out of Scriptures received from and contributed by the American Bible Society."

A special service worthy of note involving an almost equally large annual expenditure of the Society's funds is the furnishing of Bibles and Testaments to the American Sunday-School Union. During 1937 a total of 3,528 Bibles and a slightly larger number of New Testaments were furnished, at a cost of $1,663.21. These volumes are placed in the hands of needy Sunday-school scholars by the missionaries of the Union. Sometimes a fraction of the cost is received from recipients able to pay; but this does not frequently occur. In acknowledging the most recent gift of Scriptures, the secretary of the Union writes: "I assure you that our entire force is deeply grateful for the confidence placed in us in being accorded the privilege of this annual distribution of God's Word."

When great national catastrophes occur affecting large numbers of people, a demand for

Bibles at once registers itself, and if the demand is beyond the limited resources of the District Secretaries, the need must be met in some special way. Early in 1937 the unprecedented flood in the Ohio Valley inundating cities, towns, and villages all the way from Wheeling to the junction of the Ohio and the Mississippi, is a case in point. Almost immediately churches, pastors, Sunday-school officers, and directors of refugee camps began to ask for Bibles. A special fund was raised, totaling over $5,000, with which nearly 10,000 Bibles, about the same number of New Testaments, and over 43,000 portions of Scriptures were distributed in the afflicted area. The Society's mail was heavy with letters of gratitude and appreciation.

A recurring special need which the Society rejoices to meet, is the annual request for Bibles for distribution among Indian young people in government schools. The distribution of more than 1,000 volumes, chiefly Bibles, is directed by a joint committee from the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association and the Home Missions Council. The secretary in charge, in thanking the Society for this cooperation, stated that one girl "straight from the reservation said to me a few weeks ago, 'I have a Bible from our friends in New York at the house where the Bibles come from. I like it. What do I say to them?' . . . I wish that the Society might know how much its gift is really appreciated by the Indian students, and by their parents also."

In certain areas the Society has cooperated with the government in its education program, by supplying free Gospels in great primer type (the size of type used in pulpit Bibles) to adult education groups, so that as these underprivileged learn to read, they also learn to read the great truths revealed in Scripture. There is no discrimination of race in this service.



A LITTLE ORPHANAGE PATIENT WITH HER FIRST BIBLE

Federal institutions where funds are not available for religious literature are regularly supplied with Bibles. Prisons, penitentiaries, veterans' hospitals, U. S. Army posts, soldiers' and sailors' homes, and naval vessels are included in the list thus ministered to. Grants of Scriptures are frequently made to agencies whose ministry is nation-wide, including such organizations as the Salvation Army, the Save-the-Children Fund, and the School Bag Gospel League.

During 1937 more than ten thousand dollars were spent for the "specials" just described! More than 135,000 Bibles, Gospels, Testaments, and portions were sent out through these channels! Changed lives! Fresh hope! New resolutions! Many determined to "live pure, speak true, right wrongs!" Many beholding the Lamb of God! Many brought into fellowship with the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ!

The Bible in Song and Story

UNDER this title the American Bible Society is expanding its program of radio broadcasting from various centers across the land. The program in the New York City area has been on the air since the first of the year from Station WNEW, 1250 kilocycles, on Sunday evenings, at 6:30 Eastern Standard time. The following stations have agreed to give similar programs under the direction of local church and missionary leaders. As we go to press, the complete data as to exact hours of the programs are not at hand. If you live in the neighborhood of one of these stations, call up and ask for the hour of "The Bible in Song and Story." The stations are: Alabama—WJRD Tuscaloosa; Illinois—WJJD Chicago, WCBS Springfield; Massachusetts—WSAR Fall River; Missouri—WMBH Joplin, KMOX St. Louis, KFUO St. Louis; New York—WMFF Plattsburg; Ohio—WBNS Columbus; Texas—KFPL Dublin; Washington—KIT Yakima.

A Whole Town Hears the Bible Read

Congratulations to the Methodist Church of Scranton, Kansas, whose celebration of Universal Bible Sunday was unique and striking

PROBABLY no one in the little town of Scranton, Kansas, was alarmed when the Methodist Church bell began to ring at three in the morning on Sunday, December 12; for everybody knew that the service was to begin that day at this unusual hour.

When it was over, Pastor Alexander wrote to the editors of the BIBLE SOCIETY RECORD, "Yesterday was the biggest day in the fourteen years of my ministry."

The occasion was the annual celebration of Universal Bible Sunday. One wonders whether any church in all the land observed the day more ambitiously or elaborately.

What they did at Scranton on Universal Bible Sunday was to read the whole New Testament through at one service.

The success of such an undertaking was due to the thorough and prayerful preparation made by Pastor Alexander and his church leaders. On the previous Sunday a beautiful new pulpit Bible, the gift of a member of the church, was dedicated. The special dedicatory service prepared and furnished by the American Bible Society was used. The sermon on this day of preparation dealt with "The Making of the New Testament," and was designed to give the congregation a better background for participation in the program planned for the next Sunday.

In anticipation for the great service on December twelfth, there was mailed to each family in the church a special calendar prepared by the American Bible Society and announcing the unique service of worship that was to last for approximately eighteen hours. No detail was overlooked. Seventy-two readers, eight musicians, and nineteen ushers were appointed, whose final instructions were: "This is to be our greatest day. No effort has been spared to make it such. Come in the spirit of prayer. 'My Word shall not return unto me void.'"

And they came. The mayor of the town came at 2:30 a. m., and remained till the benediction was pronounced at 9 p. m. The population of Scranton is about six hundred, and practically



WHERE THE WHOLE NEW TESTAMENT WAS READ AT ONE SERVICE

all the town was there. Many stayed through the entire eighteen hours.

The setting for this unusual service of worship was unique and most fitting. Pastor Alexander describes the accompanying picture in these words, "The great rainbow sixteen feet high . . . and the rose and blue cross in the background, the violet streamers and the candles, made a sight lovely beyond description."

The picture was taken while Miss Mary Jean Harris, a teacher of fifth- and sixth-grade girls, was reading from the Book of Revelation at the close of the service. She is wearing one of the four blue gowns provided for the readers, which added to the pageantry of color that lent dignity and meaning to the occasion.

The cost of these four silk gowns and all the platform decorations was less than ten dollars. The Scranton church is not a wealthy church, but is far richer from the experience of last Universal Bible Sunday.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

BIBLE SOCIETY RECORD

A Journal Dedicated to the Wider Distribution of the Holy Scriptures

Editors: THE SECRETARIES
Address correspondence to Francis Carr Stifler, Editorial Secretary, Bible House, New York

VOL. 83 MARCH 1938 NO. 3

Helen Keller Tribute

THE commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the first meeting between Helen Keller and her famous teacher, the late Anne Sullivan Macy, has created unusual interest in the New York Point Bible which was used by Miss Keller for over fifteen years, and which she presented to the Society in exchange for a Bible in Braille, the system she now reads. Miss Keller says that the Bible is a book to live with, to think from, and to die by.

As March 3, 1887, was the day on which her teacher came to her, March 3, 1938, will climax the nation-wide celebration which has been conducted under the auspices of the American Foundation for the Blind for the past several months.

Aided and guided by her most gifted teacher, Helen Keller has become an outstanding figure of her time. Because of her noble character and notable achievements, in spite of physical handicaps, she is an inspiring example to vast numbers of the sighted as well as to the sightless throughout the world.

Both teacher and pupil have contributed much in bringing light to those who sit in darkness.

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RETURNING from his furlough, Secretary Lacy of the China Agency arrived in Shanghai on January 2, after spending part of Christmas day with Secretary Aurell in Tokyo. He reports that the presses in Shanghai were less damaged than he had anticipated. Because of the difficulties of shipping books up the river, arrangements have been made to print Gospels in Hankow. A cablegram received February 14 reports three editions already printed there. Further bombing there may bring these operations to an end. At the various subagencies the Society's representatives are carrying on with grim determination.

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SECRETARY FRANKLIN, of the Siam Agency, arrived for his furlough in December.

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Do you need help and encouragement in reading your Bible regularly? Do you know of others who do? You will find it in a little leaflet called "My Reading Record," a copy of which will be supplied to anyone who will send his request either to the Bible House in New York or to any of the District offices. The leaflet will be supplied in quantities on payment of mailing costs.

February Meeting of the Board

THE tenth stated meeting of the Board of Managers of the American Bible Society in its one hundred and twenty-second year was held at the Bible House, Park Avenue and 57th Street, New York, on Thursday, February 3, 1938, at 3:30 p. m., President John T. Manson in the chair.

Devotional exercises were conducted by Secretary Stifler.

The minutes of the ninth stated meeting of the year were approved.

Minutes of the various standing committees were presented and approved, and their recommendations adopted.

The Reverend Drs. Frederick Lent and Burton S. Easton were elected Life Members and assigned to the Committee on Versions.

The Reverend Mark A. Dawber, D.D., was assigned to the Committee on Home Agencies.

Secretary North was authorized to visit the West Indies Agency during the spring of 1938.

A Bible published by the American Bible Society in 1859, which had been owned by the Overland Mail Company and placed in one of its stations for the use of travelers and station agents, was presented to the Board. This Bible is a gift from Mr. G. W. Wickland, of the Wells Fargo Bank & Trust Company.

The meeting was adjourned.

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THE LAST WORD!

If you have enjoyed reading this issue of the BIBLE SOCIETY RECORD, why not pass it on to your pastor or some interested friend. Every Bible lover should become acquainted with the RECORD.

ANOTHER PRACTICAL THING FOR YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL TO DO

If you are using the International Uniform Lessons, you are studying St. Mark's Gospel.

Here is a Suggestion: Supply your class with penny portions of St. Mark to distribute on Sunday afternoons to those who never owned a Bible or read a verse of Scripture.

St. Mark can be supplied not only in English, but in various other languages, some of which your needy neighbors speak.

Order from the nearest office of the American Bible Society, carefully reading the instructions below.

◆ *Beside the English, St. Mark is obtainable in Chinese, French, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish at one cent; other languages, from two to five cents a copy. As transportation is not included, write, before ordering, for descriptive leaflet showing postage cost.*

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY



"That was certainly a wise decision..."
"I'm going to tell my friends about the Bible Society's annuity plan."

THE problem of where to place their money has been solved for many people by the American Bible Society. The Society's annuity plan provides what most people want . . . safety, a generous return, regularity of income.

Let us tell you of this plan which has worked for nearly ninety years without a single loss to any annuity holder, and with every payment sent promptly when due. And in addition to producing peace of mind, there is the personal satisfaction of helping in the important work of distributing the Bible throughout the world.

Our booklet "A Gift That Lives" describes the plan fully. Send for it now.

AN INCOME ASSURED MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY

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Bible House, Park Ave. & 57th St., New York

Please send me, without obligation, your booklet 62M entitled "A Gift That Lives."

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*Address*_____ *Denomination*_____

*City*_____ *State*_____